

Radical Abolitionist.

"PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND, UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF."—LEV. xxv. 10.

VOLUME I.]

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The Radical Abolitionist.

WILLIAM GOODELL, Editor.

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PROSPECTUS.

The "RADICAL ABOLITIONIST" proposes a proclamation of "liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof." It demands of the *American Government* and the *American People*, the immediate and unconditional abolition of *American Slavery*.

It makes this demand on behalf of three millions of Americans *already enslaved*, on behalf of twenty millions more in process of *becoming enslaved*, and in behalf of the untold millions of their posterity, who must be enslaved for ages to come, unless *American Slavery* be overthrown.

It urges this demand in the name of humanity chaffered, republicanism disgraced, religion dishonored, the Holy Scriptures perverted, the Saviour blasphemed, the laws of nature and of nature's God trampled under foot.

It denies that the *Federal Government*, under the *Federal Constitution*, has either a moral or a political right to tolerate slavery, in any of the States belonging to the *Federal Union*, for a single day.

"The United States SHALL guarantee to EVERY State in the Union a republican form of government."—*Constitution*.

"The foundation of republican government is the right of every citizen, in his person and property, and in their management."—*Jefferson*.

It denies that "the reserved rights of the States" include any such right as that of holding property in man, as no such "right" can exist; and Mr. Madison tells us that the *Federal Convention* would not permit the *Constitution* to recognize any such right.—*Vide Madison Papers*.

It affirms that the *Constitution* unequivocally inhibits the States from maintaining slavery.

"No State shall pass any bill of attainder, or laws impairing the obligation of contracts." And "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."—*Constitution*.

It affirms that the *Constitution* was formed by "the people of the United States," (all of them,) "to secure the blessings of LIBERTY for (themselves) and (their) posterity," without exception or distinction of race or color. And hence, no portion of "the people of the United States" can be constitutionally enslaved, and the declared object of the *Constitution* requires the *Federal Government* to "secure the blessings of liberty" to each and all of them.

If the *Constitution* is not available for these purposes, it is of no practical value, it is condemned by its own high professions, and the people have no alternative left them but to provide a better government for their protection, or become the serfs of the petty oligarchy of three hundred thousand slaveholders, who are now suffered to control and insult a great nation.

The "RADICAL ABOLITIONIST" recognizes as valid law no unrighteous enactments. It affirms, with all the great writers on Common Law, "that statutes against fundamental morality are void;" that "no human laws have any validity if contrary to the law of God, and such of them as are valid derive all their force, mediately, or immediately, from this original."—*FORTESCUE*.

On this ground, as well as from the admitted absence of any positive law in this country, establishing slavery; from the known incompetency of the colonial legislatures under British common law, to legalize it; from the ascertained illegality of the African slave trade, by which the colonies were supplied with slaves; and from the unanimous declaration of the thirteen original States, in the very act of establishing their independent governments, that all just governments "are founded on the 'inalienable right' of 'all men' to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,'" we affirm the absolute illegality of American slavery. We deny that it has any more legality in Georgia than in Massachusetts; that it is any more legal than the African slave-trade, or any other form of piracy and crime.

The object of this paper will be to unfold, explain, vindicate, and propagate these sentiments, calling on the people to maintain them at the ballot-box, thus providing for a federal legislature, a federal judiciary and a federal executive, that shall give them a national expression and force.

REVIEW OF THE LIBERATOR.

The *Liberator* of Sept. 7 contains an editorial notice of the pamphlet containing the "Proceedings of the Convention of Radical Abolitionists at Syracuse," in which the editor finds fault with the Call to that Convention. We will show our readers the portion of the Call objected against. After mention of the Whig, Democratic, Know-Nothing, and Free Soil or Independent Democratic parties, stating their position with respect to Slavery, the call proceeded to say :

"The American Anti-Slavery Society or Garrison party, like ourselves, labors, within the limits of moral suasion, to abolish slavery, but, unlike ourselves, it employs no political power to this end. What is still worse, it seeks to separate the free States from the slave States, and to leave the slave States, so far as concerns the political power of the free States, at perfect liberty to continue their oppression and torture of the black man."

At the meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in May, which I attended, I was specially invited, by name, to participate in the discussion of some resolutions involving the question of a dissolution of the Union, on the ground of the pro-slavery character of the *Constitution*. The discussion went on pleasantly, for a time, when Mr. Garrison alluded to this call, and seemed to regard it as insulting and abusive. I assured him that it was not so intended. It was written by a member of our Committee who had never been regarded hostile to Mr. Garrison or the Society, but quite friendly to them both—a contributor to their Tract fund.

It only stated the position of the Society, as understood by us, indicating, in plain but not disrespectful language, our objections to that position. It involved no imputation of wrong intentions. It was far less incensed than the language which, a few minutes previous, had been used by S. S. Foster, who had said that the position of Gerrit Smith and William Goodell, while they supported the *Constitution*, was as pro-slavery as that of Stephen A. Douglass. "Now, I take no offence," said I, "at this strong language of Mr. Foster. He does not intend to impeach the anti-slavery integrity of Mr. Smith or myself. He only wishes to express clearly and strongly his conceptions of our false position. Just so with the signers to that Call. I disclaim any design, on our part, to impeach the anti-slavery integrity of Mr. Garrison and his associates, or to say anything offensive to them. And I trust the disclaimer will be received as satisfactory."

I understood Mr. Garrison to say that it was so. There was much moving about and conversation going on. I may have misapprehended him. But I rested in that impression. Yet now, in the *Liberator* of Sept. 7, it is brought forward again. Now, as in May, it comes in such a connection as to divert attention from the important issue between us and the Garrison party, and to introduce angry personalities in the place of calm and candid discussion. We regret this. The cause of truth and of liberty gains nothing, but loses much, from such a course. If the position of the American Anti-Slavery Society was incorrectly stated, Mr. Garrison could have said so, and could have pointed out wherein it was incorrect. Or, if the effects of that position were not stated or inferred correctly, the error could have been pointed out, calmly. But Mr. Garrison has done neither of these things.

Will he now undertake to do it? Will he say that his Society does "employ political power for the abolition of Slavery"? No.—Will he say that it does not "seek to separate the free States from the slave States"? No.—And therefore he will not, he cannot, we think, deny that its position is stated correctly. Next, will he undertake to show that we have not correctly stated what was involved in that position? Will he affirm that it does not "leave the slave States, so far as the political power of the free States is concerned, at perfect liberty to continue their oppression and torture of the black man"? No. We do not believe he will venture to affirm this. If he will—and if he can substantiate his affirmation, we will "knock under," and confess that our Committee were mistaken. But if he will not, and cannot, let him not think to make up the deficiency by complaining that we "joined in throwing a taunt upon" him and his Society—that we brought "an accusation" against them. Little to the point, in such a discussion, will he find such complaints as the following:

"In that Call 'the Garrison party' were reproached for not acting politically for the abolition of Slavery—or in other words, for being true to their moral convictions, and unwilling to uphold what they regard as 'a covenant with hell.' A singular respect for conscience, this."

It is no disrespect to any man's conscience to say, that, in our judgment, that conscience is a misinformed, a mistaken one, nor to say that the effects of such misinformed consciences are as deplorable, as we honestly conceive them to be. We could not be "true to our moral convictions" without exercising this right. Would Mr. Garrison deny us this right? Must its exercise be construed into a "taunt"—an offence? "A singular respect for conscience, this."

Still less to the point, on such an issue as that arising from the statement made in our Call, will Mr. Garrison find an appeal to prejudices and ill-blood growing out of an old personal controversy, fifteen years ago, with a single member of our Committee. The merits of that controversy, whatever they might be, could have no bearing upon the questions—whether or no the Anti-Slavery Society, at the present time, (1) employs political action against slavery, or (2) whether it seeks to separate the free States from the slave States, or (3) whether that would "leave the slave States, so far as the political power of the free States are concerned, at perfect liberty to continue their oppression and torture of the black man"? THESE are the questions at issue, on our Call, and the *only* questions, deserving public attention, and they are not to be determined by referring to difficulties that occurred between a member of the Committee and Mr. Garrison, fifteen years ago. Were it otherwise, Mr. Garrison would have found no occasion to write the following.

"As to the ground on which a dissolution of the Union is advocated by us, did any one of the signers of that call need to be enlightened? It is precisely the same as that on which we base the duty of Abolitionists to separate from every pro-slavery political party, and every pro-slavery religious body—THE GROUND OF PRINCIPLE—leaving the consequences to God."

After a "taunt" at two members of our Committee, which we need not introduce, Mr. Garrison proceeds:

"William Goodell and Gerrit Smith are neither so dull of perception, nor so morally obtuse, as not to comprehend it at a glance."

For ourselves, we accept the compliment, gratefully. We do hold "the duty of Abolitionists to separate from every pro-slavery political party, and every pro-slavery religious body, on the ground of PRINCIPLE, leaving the consequences to God." We have held the sentiment ever since 1839-40, though Mr. Garrison then dissented from us, as will appear from the following extract from an editorial in his Liberator, January 31, 1840, in reply to Gerrit Smith:

"If we must have a new political party to abolish Slavery, must we not also have a new religious sect, for the same purpose? Is the necessity greater in the one case than in the other? Yet who, among Abolitionists, is prepared for such a measure? As to the right of Abolitionists to withdraw from existing sects and parties, and start a rival to them all, it is indisputable as it is to organize themselves into a separate political party. But such a course, we are persuaded, WHETHER PURSUED POLITICALLY OR RELIGIOUSLY, WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE

OF SERIOUS MISCHIEF TO THE ANTI-SLAVERY CAUSE. Nor is it demanded by anything in the history of that cause. The progress of Abolitionism is strong and sure; and by its own inherent power, must and will overcome, ere long, both Church and State, as now organized."

The doctrine of "No union with Slaveholders" formed no part of the creed of Mr. Garrison then. Nor was it incorporated into the platform of the American Anti-Slavery Society until its annual meeting in 1844.

Mr. Garrison will therefore exercise forbearance towards us when we confess that we are "so dull of apprehension" as not "to comprehend, at a glance," that the ground on which he advocates a dissolution of the Union is identical with that "upon which (we) base the duty of Abolitionists to separate from every pro-Slavery political party and every pro-slavery religious body—THE GROUND OF PRINCIPLE—leaving the consequences with God."

1. We base that duty on the ground (among other things) that political parties and religious bodies are voluntary organizations which we can either remain in, or secede from, at our pleasure. Our joining them was a free voluntary act. And simply by a free voluntary act we can leave them. It is a personal act which a person can himself consummate without the leave or assistance of others. In striking contrast with this, we were born into our national relations to the American people and the American Government. We are a part of the American people and share in the public responsibilities of that people. We know of no way in which we can sever ourselves, individually, from these relations and responsibilities without removing out of the nation. And we know of no nation or government that is not, in some way, guilty of the sin of oppression; so that "we must needs go out of the world" in order to secede "ON THE GROUND OF PRINCIPLE."

We are, *in fact*, a component part of the American people, and Mr. Garrison himself is equally so. His protest against it, does not alter *the fact*. And our protest against the oppressive acts of the nation is even more effective than his, for it goes into the ballot-box of the nation, and has to be recorded there, as an act of one of its members. Individually, we cannot secede from the nation while we remain within the geographical bounds of the nation: neither can Mr. Garrison. He belongs to the nation as much as we do.

2. We base the duty of secession from pro-slavery political parties and pro-slavery religious bodies, upon the consideration that, the membership being purely voluntary, such membership, perpetuated, involves a participancy in their unrighteous acts. Not so where the membership is necessary, and involuntary. I can help being a member of the political or ecclesiastical party, but I cannot help belonging to the family into which I was born, and to the nation in which I reside. In leaving the political party I do not leave the community. In leaving the particular religious body, I do not leave the Christian Church, any more than I leave my family relation. There are vital relations that may not and that cannot be sundered. It is idle to refuse to discriminate between these and voluntary, temporary, incidental relations. The distinction is founded in nature, and will forever remain.

3. But the Union between the States, it may be said, can be dissolved. Perhaps it can. Perhaps it cannot. Until it is dissolved, Garrisonians are, in reality, in it, as truly as other people are. The question is—whether the same principle that demands a separation of individuals from the pro-slavery political parties and pro-slavery religious bodies demands a separation of the free States from the slave States? In a number of important particulars the cases are not parallel.

A separation from a pro-slavery political party or organized religious body, in order to be a separation "on the ground of principle, leaving the consequences to God," must be a *moral* separation, dividing between the good and the bad. It must be a *moral*, not a *geographical* division. A separation from the political party or the religious body that should be a separation from only the Southern portion of them, while connection was retained with the Northern branches of them, being equally pro-slavery, would be no *moral* separation at all. But a separation between the Northern and the Southern States would be merely a geographical and not a moral separation. There are more Abolitionists (including slaves,) south of Mason and Dixon's line, than there are north of it. A separation of the free from the slave States would be a separation from these. There is as rank pro-slaveryism at the North as at the South; and much more bitter and more malignant prejudice against color. A separation of the free from the slave States, if Mr. Garrison and his friends could effect it, would leave them and leave all Abolitionists in political connection with these! As a *moral* separation, what would be gained? Can Mr. Garrison say, truthfully, that, on *moral* grounds, he would prefer a political or an ecclesiastical connection with Judge Kane, or Dr. Nehemiah Adams, to similar connections with Mr. Toombs or Dr. Breckenridge? Would he regard it a work of moral purification (such as is sought by separating from servile political and religious parties,) if the old Commonwealth of Massachusetts should sanctimoniously wash her hands of all political connection with Cassius M. Clay, John G. Fee, and all the colored and white haters of Slavery at the South, while she hugged to her bosom the Edward G. Lorings and Benjamin F. Hallets of New England? Would he see the same "principle" exemplified in both cases? We confess ourselves "so dull of apprehension or so morally obtuse," that we should not. And consequently, we are so "dull or obtuse" that we cannot base a dissolution of the Union between the free and the slave States on the same grounds upon which we base our separation from pro-slavery parties and religious bodies. The things are unlike each other. They do not exemplify the same principle. If Mr. Garrison can show us some way of dividing the Union that would throw all the pro-slavery men and negro-haters on the south side of Mason and Dixon's line, and all the friends of impartial liberty on the north side of it, we will accept his statement of the *grounds* of such separation as being correct.

The least that we could accept would be that the Northern States should present a decided majority—a preponderating influence in favor of impartial liberty, before their separa-

tion from the slave States on account of slavery could have any moral foundation or force. Such a majority, indeed, Mr. Garrison's plan contemplates. But whenever the time comes in which that shall be the case, we shall have little difficulty in securing the abolition of slavery, without a dissolution of the Union.

Separation from pro-slavery political parties and religious bodies "on the ground of principle," has always been the separation of a faithful minority from a corrupt majority whom it could not control and whom it could not reasonably expect to reform. But a separation of the free States from the slave States would be a separation of the majority from a minority which it has abundant power to control. The majority whom Mr. Garrison, in this case, exhorts to secede, has only to reform itself, and the reformation is reached. Reform the North, and we could easily reform or control the South.

4. If Mr. Garrison insists (as his friends sometimes do, and as he seems to do,) that a separation from slaveholders, and therefore a dissolution of the Union, is demanded by moral principle, because it is morally wrong and preposterous to hold political relations with slaveholders to put down slavery and with sheep-stealers to put down sheep-stealing—then we answer, as we have elsewhere done, that the argument goes as directly for the disbanding of the State governments and of all civil government, as it does for a dissolution of the Union. It goes against all punishment or restraint of sheep-stealers and men-stealers by the communities to which they belong. All civil government involves a political connection of the community with criminals, for the restraint and punishment of crime. And we are just so dull of perception or morally obtuse" that we do not "comprehend at a glance" the identity of the "PRINCIPLE" of separation by minorities from pro-slavery political parties and religious bodies, with the principle that disbands society, abrogates civil government, and proclaims impunity to crime.

In this same article, instead of reasoning the question, candidly, Mr. Garrison labors to pour obloquy and ridicule upon the attempt of "Mr. Lewis Tappan and his associates"—"the eight gentlemen who signed the call for the Syracuse Convention" to put a *liberty* securing construction upon the Constitution of the United States, when all the great and noble in the land, the Presidents, Legislatures, State Courts, and even the Supreme Court of the United States—(infallible and immaculate as such slaveholders and slaveocrats must needs be) have so authoritatively and conclusively decided to the contrary! No believer in Papal infallibility—no assailant of the right and duty of private judgment, could have gone farther in sneering at the possible detection of antiquated error, or the new discovery of neglected or outraged truth! Hear him:—"It is the object of these eight gentlemen," says Mr. Garrison, "to convince them" (the conservators of despotism, as his description makes them) "that they are all in a muddle together!"

Well! What if they have attempted it? Is the attempt an unworthy one? Or does it become WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON to sneer at them for it? Would he have done thus in

1836? Did he then greet in this manner the similar attempts of N. P. Rogers and Samuel J. May? Will he tell us the date of his own conversion to his present views—how long it was after A.D. 1840, and under whose instruction he was indoctrinated, and what were the new arguments?

Suppose instead of "Lewis Tappan" he had written "Granville Sharp"—changing the date from 1855, back to 1770—and putting York and Talbot, and Blackstone and Mansfield instead of the Judges of our Supreme Court. Could he not have made out as piquant and as successful a satire upon the liberators of James Somerset, as he has now made upon "the eight gentlemen" at Syracuse?

In his eagerness to claim all the great men on his side, Mr. Garrison lugs in Jefferson and Madison.—Jefferson who exclaimed, "With what execration should the statesman be loaded" who "permits" the practice of slaveholding—Jefferson who said "The Almighty has no attributes that could take sides with us in such a contest" as that which Mr. Garrison believes to have been stipulated for in the "compact." Madison, who would not consent that the Constitution should recognize the possibility of property in man—Madison, who testifies that the Convention revised the phraseology it had employed, on the suggestion of Mr. Randolph that it might be construed into an implication of such a recognition! We marvel why he did not also lug in Patrick Henry, who told the Virginia Convention that the Constitution, in clear and unequivocal terms, gave Congress power "to make all slaves free"—and also the Virginia Convention that ratified the Constitution, with that understanding of its import.

In the use of Mr. Garrison's own language (of course respectful and decorous,) which we will now return to him, we say,—To take Mr. Garrison's position, in respect to the Constitution, is "to ignore the most positive evidence to the contrary, and to trifle with the human understanding. We lament to see time, talent, money, and effort spent, in this abortive manner, at such a crisis." And we will add—"Cui bono?" What good can it do, while the nation is staggering under the usurpations of mobocrats, to confirm the monstrous assumption that it is all done in obedience to the "supreme law of the land"?

"OUR NATIONAL CONFEDERACY."

The Anti-Slavery Bugle (Sept. 1) contains an account of the proceedings of the Western Anti-Slavery Society at their late anniversary held at Alliance, Ohio, from which we copy the following:

"Whereas, Our national confederacy was originally formed by a concession to slaveholders of their monstrous claim to hold and treat human beings as chattels, therefore,

"Resolved, That it was wicked and infamous in its original organization.

"And Whereas, more than sixty years of experience in this Union has proved its worthlessness to protect the personal liberties of those already free, and only adapted to perpetuate and extend Slavery, therefore,

"Resolved, That it is the *right* and the *duty* of each non-slaveholding State to secede from the present Union, and form a confederacy on the principle of 'No Union with Slaveholders.'

"Resolved, That each man who forms or enters into an alliance with slaveholders, on the

principle that the majority shall rule, and the minority submit to, and help execute the will of the majority, and that the same rights, privileges and protection be extended to slaveholders that are extended to non-slaveholders, must be by virtue of his position in such an Union, an enemy to justice and liberty, and must be held responsible for the consequences, should the government be directed to the support of slaveholding, slave-catching and slave-trading.

"Resolved, That as our only hope of abolishing slavery, and of securing the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, is in the dissolution of the present Union and the formation of a confederacy based on the principles of impartial liberty, therefore we will do what we can to get the States in which we live, to take initiatory steps for the formation of such a government."

REMARKS.

The first "Whereas" on which the first resolution is founded, is not only unsustained by the political history of the country, but is flatly contradicted by it. No such "concession to slaveholders" was ever made. Not a syllable of it can be found in the bond. On the other hand (if the Constitution of 1789 be intended,) the historical record furnished by Madison proves that the Convention took special care that the document should not contain any such concession. And the document itself attests the verity of the statement. It carefully says "service for a term of years"—and "service and labor," instead of "servitude," (which was first written,) lest it should be understood to refer to the "condition of slaves" instead of "the obligations of free persons."* They would not admit the idea that man could hold property in man. And when it was proposed to insert the word "slave" into the rendition clause, "it met with such strenuous opposition as to compel the immediate withdrawal of the motion."† If by "national confederacy" the old "Articles of Confederation" be intended (which we can hardly suppose,) it is notorious to every body that not even the slaveholders themselves ever pretended to find any "concessions" to slavery in *that* document. Assuredly it is not to be found in the Declaration of Independence! The real truth of the case is, "our national confederacy was originally formed" by Congress in 1774, in the "Articles of Association" signed by the delegates of the Colonies, which directly prohibited the slave trade, in anticipation of "the abolition of domestic slavery," and preparatory to that measure.

The second "Whereas" involves the absurdity of pronouncing a thing "worthless" because it has never been properly used. In this way, a cartload of the very best description of scythes might be proved, by the same logic, to be "worthless" and "adapted" only to mischief, because, instead of having been applied to the cutting of grass, they had only been employed to cut the legs of the animals which the hay should have fed. The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, too, a month before the passage of the 'Maine law' in that State, might have been proved to be "worthless," because "for more than sixty years of experience" it had done nothing to prevent intemperance but much to encourage it, and to protect rumsellers.

* Vide Madison Papers, Vol. iii. p. 1569.

† Vide Gerrit Smith's Speech on the Nebraska Bill.

The foundation of the "Resolutions" being thus swept away, they are left without anything to stand upon.

The second and third resolutions, in their connections, involve particulars which have no real existence in any truthful history of "our national confederacy." No such "alliance" was ever formed. The minority did not agree "to submit to and execute the will of a majority" of slaveholders or of sheep-stealers, or of burglars, or of any other depredators upon human rights. On the contrary, the protection of human rights by the suppression and punishment of all outrages upon them, entered vitally into "our national confederacy"—"to establish justice and secure the blessings of liberty." And this is seen whether we examine the Constitution of 1789, or the Articles of Confederation of 1778, or the Declaration of 1776, or the Articles of Association of 1774. In each and every one of the "compacts" "the security of liberty" was the paramount object, and was so set down in the bond! If there were slaveholders and burglars and sheep-stealers who assented to this, and came into the agreement (as doubtless there were,) so much the better. They were doubly bound to quit their burglary and sheep-stealing and slaveholding, and demean themselves as honest citizens. And whenever any of them failed to do this, "the will of the majority" as ascertained and expressed by the public adoption and ratification of these instruments and by their own tacit assent, was to be executed in the suppression of their criminal practices. This is the sum of the "social compact" the world over. And it is doubly preposterous to assume, without and against proof, in the very teeth of their express and solemn declarations and provisions, that they intended the contrary.

Let the third resolution be so changed as to substitute sheep-stealers and non-sheep-stealers for slaveholders and non-slaveholders, &c. &c., and we should all see, at once, the absurdity of supposing any such "confederacy" or of any such agreement that a minority of honest men were pledged "to help execute the will of a majority of" plunderers. Only let it be remembered that there was never any more legality in man-stealing than there is or was in sheep-stealing, and the illusion will vanish at once.

If it still be insisted (as it often has been,) that there is a moral incongruity and a political inconsistency in forming or maintaining a political union with slaveholders in order to put down slaveholding, and with sheep-stealers to put down sheep-stealing, then we have not only to say that the argument not only goes in favor of a dissolution of the Union between the States, but equally in favor of dissolving all the State governments likewise, and all the other civil governments in the world, whether slaveholding or non-slaveholding. The principle goes against all civil governments, as such, whether righteously or unrighteously administered. It denies the essential idea of civil government, and especially all governments by the people.

Civil government may well be defined as the orderly action of a community or of society, to protect human rights by the suppression of outrages against them. Republics or commonwealths are founded on this duty, which includes, of course, the duty of coming into polit-

ical relations with all men, good and bad (especially the bad) for this very object. To deny this, is to deny the public duty of protecting human rights and of punishing and restraining violations of them. It is to deny the duty of abolishing slavery by any judicial or legislative process whatever, as was done in our non-slaveholding States and in Great Britain.

RADICAL ABOLITIONIST.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER, 1855.

NOTE TAKE NOTICE, that we do not make any charges for papers sent to those who have not ordered or subscribed for them.

GENERAL CONVENTION OF RADICAL POLITICAL ABOLITIONISTS

AT BOSTON, MASS.

On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday,

Oct. 23d, 24th and 25th, 1855,

(By appointment of a similar Convention in Syracuse, N. Y. in June last.)

The undersigned, a Committee of Arrangements appointed by the "Central Abolition Committee," are authorized by said Committee to invite a General Convention of "Radical Political Abolitionists" in Boston, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, October 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 1855, for the purpose of discussing the *illegality and unconstitutionality of Slavery*, and the power of the Federal Government over slavery in the States.

Also, to provide means for propagating the sentiments and advocating the measures of "Radical Political Abolitionists," and, if judged best, to organize for that object.

A NATIONAL ABOLITION SOCIETY.

Among those expected to be in attendance and take part in the proceedings, are Gerrit Smith, Lewis Tappan, S. S. Jocelyn, Frederick Douglass, A. Pryne, L. C. Matlack, A. G. Benman, A. B. Burdick—the undersigned, and others. The Convention will be held in the Meionian Hall, in Tremont Temple.

WILLIAM GOODELL,
JAS. McCUNE SMITH,
Com. of Arr.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE JUBILEE.—We have on hand, a few full sets of the American Jubilee, in twelve numbers, which will be furnished for twenty-five cents, being half the original price. We have also a quantity of miscellaneous numbers, which we will furnish GRATIS for those who will send for them, pay the transportation, by express or otherwise, and distribute them.

CENTRAL ABOLITION COMMITTEE.
Wm. E. WHITING, Treasurer, 37 Broadway,
New York.

Payments on Monthly subscriptions to the funds, or other donations to the Committee, should be remitted to the Treasurer, as above. Funds are wanted to circulate cheap papers, tracts, and pamphlets, sustain lecturers, &c.

The liberal 'devise liberal things; and by liberal things, stand.'

THE CONVENTION AT BOSTON.

We again invite the attention of our readers to the approaching Convention of "Radical Po-

itical Abolitionists" at Boston. We trust there will be a gathering of true men, intent on securing the *abolition of slavery*, and repudiating all compromises and substitutes.

CIRCULATE THE DOCUMENTS!—We call attention to the notice of "Pamphlets and Tracts," &c. for sale at this office. Here is a cheap way of diffusing information among your neighbors.

For 25 cents you may put a brief Declaration of the principles and measures of "Radical Abolitionists" into the families of 100 of your friends and neighbors.

For One Dollar you may put a brief "Expose" of the "Constitutional Duty," &c., into fifty of the same families.

For 75 cents, (including postage of the letter ordering them) you may have copies of the "Proceedings," &c. including the Declaration, the Expose, and Address, &c. &c. sent, postage prepaid, to eight of your select neighbors or friends at a distance.

All this operation costs only **TWO DOLLARS**. Could you diffuse a greater amount of important information on the subject, to a greater number of persons, with the money? Can you not spare it for the purpose? Or half the amount? Or will not one, two, three, or four of your neighbors join with you in making up the sum? Suppose you make the trial?

Papers answer some purposes that pamphlets and tracts will not. But pamphlets and tracts answer some purposes that papers will not. We must circulate both.

A DEFINITE STANDARD.

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?"

Nothing wears out, discourages, and perplexes an army so much, as a vague, indefinite, scattering, desultory, *helter skelter* warfare against an enemy, conducted without any plan, and directed to *no particular point*.

Especially is this true of every moral and political warfare—like that against American Slavery.

A skirmish here—a skirmish there—sometimes to keep out Texas—sometimes to bring in California—at one time against the Missouri Compromise—afterwards against its repudiation.

So it was in the Temperance struggle—many years ago. Everything was conducted in a disjointed manner. One little band, in one place, pledged themselves against drinking at militia trainings. Another, in another place, went against drinking in harvest time. Others, elsewhere, resolved to abstain on election days. Very much like this, in the present struggle, some go for freedom in Kansas—some for freedom in the District of Columbia—some for a repeal of the Fugitive Slave bill. Very few are prepared to go for freedom *every where*, conceding the right to slavery *nowhere*, just as there were very few, at one period, in the Temperance ranks, who were prepared to go for total abstinence, at all times, and *every where*. Uncertainty, instability, inconsistency, want of union, want of principle, characterise all such efforts, and forbid success. There is no definite standard.

In order to have a definite standard, reformers must have a comprehensive standard. And

this is only saying, in other words, that they must have a radical standard.

In order to bring our forces to bear upon any particular point, and to keep them steadily and unitedly there, it is necessary to select a point of attack sufficiently prominent and important to make every body see, at first glance, that if the point of attack be successfully carried, the victory is complete and the warfare ended. For want of this pre-requisite, it was never practicable to enlist any great number of earnest men in the Temperance cause, and to keep them steadily and hopefully at work, before the full ground of total abstinence was taken. For want of this same pre-requisite, the great mass of the Northern community cannot be enlisted in the present anti-slavery and Free Soil movement, as commonly carried on. The people do not see any definite, fixed, comprehensive object before them—an object which, once attained, settles the whole controversy, at once, and forever.

And yet, the stale objection, against a high, definite, comprehensive, radical standard of effort—now and twenty-five years ago—is, that you must not take too strong ground, because so few could be brought to unite on it! “We must broach nothing accounted heretical! We must only go as far as the community are ready to go, already!”

The grand objection of the Temperance “leaders” against tee-totalism used to be, that it was necessary to enlist numbers, and numbers could not be had, without insisting only on a low, easy, moderate, reputable standard. The event proved that numbers could not be permanently interested in any thing short of the highest standard perceived to be true and trustworthy. Just so, in the cause of abolition. If we desire the public co-operation, we must win the public confidence—and this cannot be done—in the long run—without deserving it. The friends of Temperance won the public confidence when they deserved it. The friends of liberty will win the public confidence when they deserve it. And this will be when they rally on the standard of tee-totalism—Liberty every where—Slavery no where—Liberty now—Slavery never.

THE LATE CONVENTION OF ‘SOFTS.’

“Some things transpired at the ‘Soft’ State Convention which are not generally known to ‘outsiders,’ but which are true, and ought to be told. Full three-fourths of its members voted for Van Buren in 1848, and yet all attempts to affirm the principles of that era signally failed. The reason was that eighty or ninety of the members hold office under the National Administration, and were eager to do its bidding, while about fifty more of the delegates were either distributors of or applicants for its bounty. This gave the Administration about forty majority. These troops fought under the immediate supervision of the agents of the Administration—some of them especially deputed from Washington for the occasion. Nearly all the prominent office-holders in the State were present, active, eager, unscrupulous, and ‘the screws’ were put to faltering delegates without mercy.”—*N. Y. Tribune.*

Such are the benefits of “fusion,” as chronicled by its own advocates. First, a large majority of the Liberty party “fused” with a portion of the Whigs and Democrats. This constituted the Van Buren Free Soil party of 1848, founded on mere “non-extension.” Next

came the “fusion” of the Free Soil party of this State with the “Barnburners,” and afterwards a third fusion of these latter with the Democrats at large. The Democrats, in due time, became sub-divided into “Hards” and “Softs.” Three fourths of the “Softs,” it is now said, were of the Van Buren Free Soil party of 1848, and cannot now be brought up even to that low standard. This is like the Hibernian’s hoist—a peg lower. Perhaps it might be said that “three-fourths” of those in this State who left the Liberty party for the Van Buren movement, “just for this once,” “to secure non-extension,” (after the fashion of Kansas!) are to be found, now, among “the Softs”—soft enough to come under the censure of that organ of “fusion,” the *N. Y. Tribune*, as being even below that standard. It is easier to slide down an icy declivity than it is to slide back again. The State of New York is not the only part of the country in which similar results are to be witnessed. The same story reaches us from all quarters. We could fill our little sheet, and a much larger one, with instances of it.

My Bondage and My Freedom. By *Frederick Douglass*. New York and Auburn. Miller, Orton & Mulligan. 1855. pp. 464.

The public press and the public generally have already rendered their verdict in decided commendation of this new volume. It is rather late in the day for us to add our tribute of applause, and it is not needed. Yet we cannot refrain from expressing our high gratification in its perusal. Much as we had been interested in the writer, and well acquainted, as we were, with his writings and his public speaking, we must confess that this piece of autobiography exhibits his literary powers in a new phase. It will always hold a rank among the model writings of that class—simple, straightforward, easy, unpretending, yet graphic, life-like, and touching the chords of sympathy with irresistible power.

In our judgment it has high claims to be regarded as a first-rate production, in more aspects than one. If any one wishes to find or to cite a rare specimen of what is called a “self-made man,” or to learn or show from what depths, against what obstacles, and amid what discouragements, the humblest of our species may rise to an enviable pre-eminence, the life of Frederick Douglass is, emphatically *the book* for the purpose. For this reason, if for no other, it should be in the hands of every young man, and in every family in an obscure and discouraging position. If any one wishes to adjust the rival claims of simple biography and the best tales of fiction, let not the final decision be made without comparing this narrative of Frederick Douglass with the most admired productions of the imagination. If an antidote be needed for color-phobia—if the grave question whether or no the descendants of Africans are inferior, and whether the slaves, if emancipated, could ever rise, in this country, is still awaiting decision, in any sane mind, this volume of Frederick Douglass, if anything, will be likely to clear up all doubts and solve all difficulties. If any one, at this late day, needs to be certified in respect to the facts, the nature, the philosophy, the workings, and the effects of the slave system, Frederick Douglass has, in this volume,

presented the needed information, and in the most attractive and unobjectionable form. If the pride of caste, birth, rank, blood, or of anything else of that nature, requires a corrective, in palaces of wealth, or in seats of science, this volume of Frederick Douglass, on the centre table, would be one of the most timely acquisitions that could be conceived. If any one desires to discriminate justly between true and false religion, and learn how to drive infidelity out of the country, he should take this volume of Douglass and study certain parts of it in connection with the practical writings of Bellamy and Edwards. If the politician would rise to the dignity of a statesman—if he would foresee the future by marking well the tendencies of the present, let him open his eyes to the fact that senators as well as theologians are already under pupilage to the fugitive of Tuckahoe. If the friends of liberty would gather up courage and find guidance, let them read the story of Douglass, let them profit by his experience, and ponder his final conclusions.

We must not close this notice without calling the attention of our readers to the enterprise and manly independence of the publishers, Messrs. MILLER, ORTON AND MULLIGAN, who advertise, among other valuable books, a variety of Anti Slavery publications—in cheering contrast to the craven class who suppress or expurgate whatever is offensive to slaveholders.

ACT OF THE MOB LEGISLATURE OF KANSAS.

AN ACT TO PUNISH OFFENCES AGAINST SLAVE PROPERTY.

Section 1. Every person, bond or free, convicted of raising a rebellion of slaves, free negroes, or mulattoes, shall suffer death.

Sec. 2. Every free person who shall aid in any rebellion of slaves, or do any overt act in furtherance thereof—shall suffer death.

Sec. 3. If any free person shall by speaking, writing or printing, advise, induce, &c. any slaves to rebel, conspire against, or murder any citizen of Kansas, or shall import or aid in importing such documents, he shall suffer death.

Sec. 4. If any person shall entice, decoy, or carry out of Kansas any slave belonging to another, with intent to deprive the owner thereof of the services of such slave, or procure the freedom of such slave, he shall suffer death, or be imprisoned at hard labor for not less than ten years.

Sec. 5. If any person shall assist in enticing, etc. (as above)—shall suffer death, or be imprisoned at hard labor for not less than ten years.

Sec. 6. If any person shall entice or carry away out of any State or Territory of the United States, any slave . . . and shall bring such slave into the Territory, &c. . . . he shall suffer death, or be imprisoned at hard labor for not less than ten years.

Sec. 8. If any person shall entice any slave to escape from the service of his master or owner, . . . or shall aid any slave in escaping, he shall be imprisoned at hard labor for not less than ten years.

Sec. 8. If any person in this territory shall aid or harbor any escaped slave from another State, . . . such person shall be punished in like manner as if such slave had escaped from his master in this territory.

Sec. 9. If any person shall resist any officer while attempting to arrest any slave that may have escaped, . . . or shall rescue such slave, or aid such slave to escape from the officer, the person so offending shall be imprisoned at hard labor for not less than two years.

Sec. 10. If any marshal, sheriff or constable, or the deputy of any such officer, shall, when

required, refuse to aid or assist in the arrest or capture of any slave that may have escaped, such officers shall be fined not less than \$100, or not more than \$500.

Sec. 11. If any person print, write, introduce into, publish or circulate, or cause to be brought into, printed, written, published or circulated, or shall knowingly aid or assist in bringing into, printing, publishing, or circulating within this territory, any book, paper, &c. containing any statements, doctrines, &c. calculated to produce a disaffection among the slaves of this territory, he shall be punished by imprisonment at hard labor for not less than five years.

Sec. 12. If any free person by speaking or writing assert or maintain, that persons have not the right to hold slaves in the territory, or shall introduce into Kansas, print, publish, write, circulate, or cause to be introduced into the territory, any book, paper, magazine, pamphlet, or circular, containing any denial of the rights of persons to hold slaves in this territory, such persons shall be deemed guilty of felony, and punished by imprisonment at hard labor for a term not less than two years.

Sec. 13. No person who is conscientiously opposed to holding slaves . . . shall sit as a juror on the trial of any prosecution of any violation of any of the sections of this act.

Act to be in force after Sept. 15, 1855.

The people of the non-slaveholding states stand aghast at the audacity and insolence of the Missourian slaveholders, who cross the stipulated line of $36^{\circ} 30'$, and promulgate such enactments. They really seem to have thought that they had built up on the Missouri Compromise line, a Chinese wall, strong and high enough to shut out the putrid atmosphere they had themselves consented to tolerate on the other side of it. Vain hope! He who gives the devil an inch may expect him to take an ell. In giving up the rights of their colored brethren, south of the line, they unwittingly conveyed a title deed to the rights of the white people north of it. So far as those who consented to the Missouri Compromise are concerned, they have only reaped the natural and appropriate fruits of their unrighteousness. The hardship is that others are involved in the effects of it. And even this comes under the scope of that wise law of Providence by which the whole body suffers in each of its members. Had even "radical abolitionists" done their whole duty, instead of yielding, as most of them have, at times, done, to the experiments of compromisers, the country might have been in a different condition.

The Kansas act, we are prepared to say, is the natural, if not the necessary result of the policy of compromises—the policy of the Northern States for thirty-five years past—the policy, even of the opponents of Slavery extension, for the last eight years—the policy of conceding the rights of "slave property" in the already existing Slave States, while attempting to deny the same "rights of property" elsewhere.

The Kansas Act is "to punish offences against slave property"—on the principle that rights of property on one side of the line of $36^{\circ} 30'$ are as sacred as they are on the other side of the same line, where Free Soilers and even Abolitionists concede the right, legally, politically, and as sheltered by Constitutional protection. With a vantage ground like this, the slaveholding oligarchy would be false to the common instincts of human nature if they failed to set up their characteristic claims in

Kansas—a claim inseparable, always and everywhere, from the tolerance of slaveholding. With a slight tincture of moral discernment, and an eye directed to the course of passing events, it would have been natural enough to have anticipated all that we now witness, before-hand.

Just look over, again, the provisions of the Kansas Act, atrocious as they are, and see whether they are not the logical and philosophical sequences of the conceded right of "slave property." What—after all, have the piratical Legislature done but to take our very prudent half-way advocates of liberty at their word, and carry out, consistently, the "property" principle thus conceded to them?

If slaves are "property" in Missouri, who shall say, or who can show, that they are not "property" in Kansas? By what argument can slaves be proved to be "property" in Missouri, that would not be equally good to prove that they are "property" in Kansas?

Do you say there are no statutes in Kansas establishing the relation of slavery, or defining who are the masters and who are the slaves? Neither are there in Missouri, or in any State of the Union!

Do you say the Constitution gives no authority for slaveholding in Kansas? Show, if you can, wherein the Constitution gives any less authority for slavery in Kansas than it does for slavery in any of the States of the Union. Point out the clause of the Constitution that says slaves are property in any of the States, but that they cease to be property when they are carried into a Territory.

It does no good to say that the Constitution recognizes the legality of slavery only in the States wherein it is legalized. It has never been legalized in *any* of the States of the Union. And besides, the Constitution says not a syllable about the recognition of legalized slavery, anywhere.

By admitting, therefore, the legality and constitutionality of slavery in the States, you have virtually admitted the right of slave property, not only in the slave States, but in the Territories.

The South sees this. And if the North does not see it, then the North is perversely blind.

Most indisputably, the almost universally conceded, but absurd and impossible right of "slave property" lies at the bottom of all the trouble in Kansas. Without the intervention of a miracle, it could not have been otherwise. Political events flow from their appropriate moral causes as regularly as any events in the physical world. And he must be but a quack in the science of statesmanship who thinks to remove the effect without removing the cause.

POLICY—AVAILABILITY—POWER.

The following extracts from a letter we have received, embody views so often expressed, that we think it may be well to put them in print, and look at them.

"I believe your society while it will do much good, will fail to effect much good that might be done with a different method of operating.

"To illustrate. You and myself agree, perfectly, as to the wickedness of slavery and as to the necessity and practicability of its speedy abolition; and we will admit also that we are perfectly agreed 'that our national Constitution

is anti-slavery in letter and spirit, and that Congress has the power to abolish slavery in the Territories and in the States.'

"Now, if I correctly understand your Society, it proposes to organize a political party, upon the theory of our government above stated. You commence promulgating your doctrines. They are regarded as *heresy*, (1) you get but a few hearers and at the election fewer votes. (2)

"Now I propose to accomplish the abolition of Slavery by *saying not one word about the Constitution*, but by electing Abolitionists to office, who, when in power, will administer the government upon *your theory*, (3) that is, for *Freedom*, and not for *Slavery*—the instrument remaining the same that it has been for fifty years. For remember, my friend, that the history of written constitutions, *not only in this country, but in all countries where they have ever existed, proves*, that notwithstanding what the letter may be, or how well guarded in words, *they depend more, for weal or woe, upon the character of the men* who are to interpret them, and upon the *TEMPER AND SPIRIT OF THE TIMES* during which they are administered, than they do upon the words, or the most sacred guarantees therein contained. (4)

"Now, you propose to begin this work by preaching a political heresy, and thus lose your valuable time and postpone the day of deliverance for these oppressed and persecuted people. (5)

"I propose to begin the same work by using *ALL my available means* to get good men elected to office, who will interpret the Constitution and administer the government upon correct principles. (6) I think you are in error in your mode of operating, but I express this opinion with some diffidence. Why, sir, if the anti-slavery men can be united in their ticket next year, the *free* States will be able to take possession of the General Government, except the Senate and the Supreme Court. It will require some years to change *them*, so as to give us a majority." (7)

REMARKS.

(1.) We see no force in the objection that the doctrines we preach are accounted "heresy." A few years ago the doctrines of Abolitionism in general were accounted heresy. A little further back, the doctrines of Temperance men were accounted heresy. "Teetotalism," too, was scouted as a "heresy," by the adherents of the old pledge. Puritanism and Protestantism began their career as heresies. Republican principles were esteemed a heresy less than a century ago. Nay, Christianity itself was thus regarded in the time of Paul. The advice of our correspondent would have been equally good against the preaching of either of these heresies. Whenever we would produce changes in society, we must, of necessity, teach that which the majority account heresy. A majority, in most of the free States, account Free Soilism almost as great a heresy as Abolitionism. The evidences in favor of a *whole* truth will always appear more conclusive than the evidences in favor of a *half* truth. Christianity was never propagated so rapidly as before it became neutralized and diluted. And we always found it much easier to convert a community to teetotalism than to the half pledge.

(2.) Our correspondent, probably, is not aware of the extent to which our doctrines are intellectually embraced, already. If all who profess to hold them were organized, and would vote them as they ought to do, we should have no fears of being left with fewer votes than the Free Soilers or Free Democrats. The want of consistent voting, and nothing else, prevents

the speedy triumph of our doctrines at the ballot-box.

(3.) If we should consent to go into an electioneering campaign, "saying not one word about the Constitution," we should probably be led to vote for candidates without knowing what were their views of the Constitution, and consequently without knowing whether, under their oath to support the Constitution, they would be able to carry out our measures or no. We should not know, and the community would not know, whether they held "our theory" of the Constitution or otherwise.

(4.) We cannot regard with favor the idea that Constitutions are nothing more nor less than whatever their administrators please to make them, for the time being. Constitutions are designed for the government and restraint of legislative bodies. But this doctrine sets them aside, and makes the persons in power independent of them and above them. It is a doctrine adapted to favor despotism rather than freedom. It is upon this idea of Constitutions that Mr. Garrison and his associates found their argument. They pronounce the Constitution pro-slavery because pro-slavery rulers have pretended to found their iniquitous measures upon it. By the same rule, the Bible might be held to be pro-slavery, because so many pro-slavery clergymen have declared it to be so. The Constitution has a fixed and definite character of its own, independent of its administrators or expounders. A fair and honest treatment of the Constitution is what we want. If it be pro-slavery, let it perish. If it be anti-slavery, let it be administered, as being such, openly, and above-board.

(5.) As to loss of time, eight years of precious time have been worse than wasted already; the once aggressive hosts of freedom have been put upon the defensive, driven back, divided, routed, and well-nigh annihilated by the very tactics our friend still advocates! If anything is ever to be done for the deliverance of the slaves, or for the salvation of the country, it is high time to discard that timid policy, and go to work like men.

(6.) "Good men elected to office" will be honest, God-fearing men. Such men, if they swear to support the Constitution, will support it. [If they think it makes compromises with slavery, they could have no right to take such an oath.] Honest men, in Congress, if they think the Constitution gives them no power over slavery in the States, will not attempt to exercise any such power. Their hands will be tied. They can do nothing for the deliverance of the slaves or of their country. It will do no manner of good—it will only "postpone" still further "the day of deliverance" to vote for and even to elect such men.

This is taking the most favorable view of the case—the supposition presented by our correspondent. But the view is altogether too favorable a one. It supposes what is not true. It supposes that Abolitionists, holding our views of the Constitution, would go into a Congressional and Presidential campaign, on even terms with Free Soilers and Free Democrats, who hold opposite views, without doing any violence to our own principles. The thing cannot be. The nominating Conventions and their candidates are always pledged to the opposite views.

They always deny the power of the Federal Government over slavery in the States, and disclaim any intention of thus abolishing *State* slavery (nine hundred and ninety-nine one-thousandths of all the slavery in the country!) This is not merely failing to do the good we are bound to do. It is doing a positive wrong. It is pledging ourselves to let slavery alone, while we believe we have rightful power to abolish it. We have no right to do this under the plea, or with the hope, that *after* we have made this pledge, and gained, perchance, some advantages by it, we shall then break our pledge, and do the whole of our duty afterwards.

There can be no such thing as sound policy in opposition to sound ethics.

(7.) We find therefore no evidence of the wisdom of the course our friend recommends. We think he greatly overrates the power of aominal "majorities," and forgets the stronger power of *the right and of the true*, identical with the power of the all-powerful One. Majorities are the effects, not the causes of power. Majorities are forests in the wind. Majorities are heaven-predestined to bow to the Truth. The more powerfully and the more directly THE TRUTH is made to bear upon them, the more certainly and the more suddenly they must bend. There is more power in five hundred votes for the truth—the *whole* truth, than in five millions of votes for a *half* truth, which is only a lie. One carpenter and twelve fishermen conquered the civilized world. "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight."

Majorities! What if Morse had spoiled his telegraph, to propitiate majorities? Would the majority ever have declared for him?

Majorities! The Whigs were the majority yesterday, and where are they? Majorities! The pro-slavery Democrats are called the majority now. But is there power, is there vitality with them?

"Power belongeth unto God." He that worketh with Him hath power. In the walks of science—of mechanism—of ethics—of politics—of religion, it is always thus—never otherwise. The more a political party or a reformatory association has of Truth, and of practical fidelity to Truth, the more it has of power. The wrecks of so-called powerful—but in reality weak parties, strewed around us, ought to teach us plain truths like these.

TREATMENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION.

We have no disposition to reproach or deride those whose views of the Constitution do not accord with our own. We can respect the conscientious scruples of those who, on such grounds, decline using the Constitution and the Government for the liberation of the enslaved, *provided* they equally forbear using them for the protection of *their own* rights.

But we are sometimes pained to witness what we cannot but feel to be a spirit of hyper-criticism and captiousness, not to say of heartlessness and trifling, on a question in which the liberties of millions are involved. The point at issue, if not misunderstood by them, is treated with what seems a levity unbecoming its importance. Look at the case.

Here are three millions of our fellow citizens in bondage. How shall we peacefully relieve them? The answer to that question must depend vitally upon the question whether the organic, the "supreme law of the land" lends its sheltering wing to the system, or whether, on the other hand, it is susceptible of being honestly and effectually used for its overthrow. Such a question certainly deserves the candid and respectful attention of the American people—especially of that portion of them who are earnestly pleading the cause of the enslaved. Does it always receive such attention from them?

Sometimes we hear the discussion of the subject deprecated as being an unprofitable one—a waste of attention and of time. Sometimes those who would wield the Constitution of their country for the suppression of slavery are characterized as "hobby-riders"—sometimes they are charged with deserting the work of "abolitionizing the country" to "dabble in the dirty waters of politics," and as being ambitious of offices for themselves.

And then again, the same persons, whose boast it is that their time and attention have not been engrossed with such useless topics, claim to be the only ones who know all about them, and they dogmatize as confidently as if nobody had ever investigated the subject but themselves.

Again, we are dissuaded from the needless task of discussing the Constitution, because we are gravely told that the people will no doubt find out, for themselves, the right way to abolish slavery, and the relation of the Constitution to slavery, when once they shall have become interested in the cause and determined to have slavery abolished. The argument confutes itself. It proves that those who are sufficiently in earnest for the abolition of slavery will be and are engaged in the very work that is deprecated as needless! It proves that the most earnest and practical Abolitionists in the country are those who are actually engaged in the discussion of the Constitution, though they are unjustly stigmatized as "hobby-riders" and political adventurers. It proves (if it proves anything,) that those who are *not* discussing the Constitution, and thus asking after the best modes of abolishing slavery, have yet to reach the highest point in earnestness and practical endeavor. We will not press this inference in a way of self-laudation, nor to the disparagement of those who differ from us. But we submit that the inference is fairly deducible from the premises. We will consent to an amendment of the premises, and say,—that those who are earnestly intent on the abolition of slavery *ought* to be, (if they are not,) earnestly engaged in discussing the Constitutional question.

There is another fallacy on this subject that deserves our attention. It seems to be taken for granted that all idea of using the Constitution for the abolition of slavery is to be abandoned if the least flaw can possibly be found in the instrument, or if the least circumstance can be discovered that looks like a wrong or defective purpose in those by whom it was framed and adopted. Now we beg leave to demur, in toto, to all such assumptions. The question for the practical farmer to settle, concerning the use of the sun in curing his hay is, *not* whether

spots may or may not be detected on its disc, or whether "clouds and darkness" have not, at times, enveloped it, but simply whether, on the whole, the sun is a convenient "instrument" for drying hay, whether a better one could easily be substituted, and whether, at any rate, it is not a good deal better than nothing, and better than mere moonshine.

A part of these thoughts have been suggested by the communication of our unknown correspondent who signs "Garrisonian"—to whom, however, we impute no conscious unfairness or captiousness, though we think that his expressions are quite too flippant and heedless.

THE CONSTITUTION PROVED PRO-SLAVERY.

The following communication is, perhaps, a pretty fair specimen of the logic employed to prove the Constitution a pro-slavery instrument—or, at least, to discredit the expositions that make it otherwise.

To W.M. GOODELL:—"The framers of the Constitution took special care to avoid the admission that there *can* be property in man." *Did they?* (1)

Who ever thought of "importing" any persons or things *not held as property?* (2)

Who ever dreamed that "a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation," *unless the imported articles be held as property?* (3)

DEAR SIR—I have read carefully your letters published in the "National Era," being more than willing to be convinced of the anti-slavery character of the Constitution. I would like to hear from you through the columns of the Era, dispersing the clouds and darkness in which the whole instrument seems to be enveloped by the insertion of the clause alluded to above. (4)

Yours for the cause of truth and humanity,
GARRISONIAN.

NOTES.

(1.) Yes, they did, if the testimony of Mr. Madison is to be depended upon. They did, if the following additional record be a truthful one.

"ART. I. SEC. 2.—On motion of Mr. Randolph, the word 'servitude' was struck out, and the word 'service' unanimously inserted, the former being thought to express the condition of slaves, and the latter the obligations of free persons."—*Madison Papers*, Vol. III. p. 1569.

If our *incog.* correspondent has any better information than Mr. Madison had, or has the means of invalidating the record, let him produce it.

(2.) Ask the British Parliament, and the West India Colonial Legislatures, who have done and devised so much to favor "the importation" of "Cooley laborers from India," who are not "property." Ask the British nation, of whom it was long ago remarked that they "imported" their monarchs from Germany. Ask the historians of Virginia, who tell us that the early colonists "imported" wives from England—aye, and paid a price for them, too, in tobacco. Were the British monarchs and the Virginian wives "held as property"?

If Congress, prior to 1808, had prohibited the importation of Germans and Irishmen, the enactment would have been an unconstitutional one; that is, if the States had thought proper to admit them.

The clause speaks explicitly of "the migration or importation of persons"—not property—and a slave cannot be "a person." That is "imported" which is "brought from

another country or State." (See Noah Webster.)

(3.) Why did not our correspondent add, "Who ever dreamed of a" capitation "tax?" A "poll tax"? Do such "taxes" prove or imply that the "persons" thus "taxed" are "held as property"?

Did no one ever hear of "a tax" by European governments upon emigrants to America? Would it be impossible to levy a "tax" upon their introduction into this country? Has such a measure never been proposed? Did the Chinese Government never do anything in which the principle was involved? Perhaps our correspondent is posted up in these matters.

(4.) Our views of this clause have lately been published in the *National Era*, the columns of which need not be encumbered with a repetition of them. If "Garrisonian" has read it he should answer it in the same paper, if he can, and show wherein it is defective.

If he has read it, he knows that "the clause alluded to above" is no part of the Constitution of this country *now*, any more than it is of the Constitution of Massachusetts or Great Britain. He knows too, that its *former* existence in the Constitution interposes no obstacle to anti-slavery action, under the Constitution now, any more than if it had never existed; or than if it had once had a place in the Constitution of Kamtskatska or Zanguebar. He knows further *if* the clause, while existing, *did* forbid Congressional action against slavery until the year 1808, then that fact, along with its limitation, long ago expired, corroborates those expositions of the Constitution that give the Federal Government full power over the subject of slavery, that temporary limitation only excepted. If the Constitution, in other respects, had been what most expositors, including "Garrisonian," represent it to have been, it would have been a silly and a subversive affair to have inserted a clause preventing Congress from interfering with slavery *until the year 1808!* According to the common construction no such clause could have been needed.

Of all the clauses of the Constitution this expired one is the last that should be brought forward to prove the Constitution pro-slavery. In the first place its pro-slavery character—its application to slavery or the slave-trade—can in no way be made out, but by throwing away all just rules of legal interpretation, as laid down by eminent jurists, and established by the Supreme Court. The known fact that there was no legalized Slavery or slave trade then in the country, and that the States were all solemnly pledged by the "Articles of Association" to put down the slave trade, declaring it unlawful, are facts conclusive against the pretense that this clause contained any legalization of the slave-trade. And, in the second place, if you give to the departed clause a pro-slavery character, you arm its ghost with the power of discrediting and disgracing all the pro-slavery constructions of all the other clauses, as has already been shown.

For all the practical purposes of Abolitionists, "the whole instrument" is, at least, as clear of "clouds and darkness" as if "the clause alluded to above" had never been written.

If the object of inquiry be something different from this—a matter of mere idle curiosity about

our fathers, or for the purpose of fixing the charge of hypocrisy upon them, it is no marvel that "clouds and darkness" which no light of discussion can ever remove, should settle upon the mind of the inquirer. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

CHRISTIAN UNION CONVENTION.—We have received a Call signed by JOHN G. FOX of Kentucky, and D. F. NEWTON, JACOB EMERICK, and JOHN H. THOMAS, of Ohio, inviting a convention for the promotion of Christian Union, commencing on Thursday, the 4th of October, at the residence of Jacob Emerick, near the Middletown, Butler Co. (O.) Depot, (Dayton, Hamilton, and Cincinnati Rail Road,) Ohio.

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